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ABSTRACT

Union Army troops marched south through Indian territory on July 17, 1863, to face the Confederate Army forces in a battle that would help determine whether the Union or the Confederacy would control the West beyond the Mississippi River. The Confederate troops that these soldiers faced in the Battle of Honey Springs concealed themselves among the trees lining a nearby water source after which the battle is named. The Battle of Honey Springs was important because of its setting in what is now eastern Oklahoma and because Native Americans fought and died there for both the North and the South. This lesson is based on the National Register of Historic Places registration file "Honey Springs Battlefield" and other sources. The lesson can be used to teach units on the Civil War, on Native American history, or on cultural diversity. It begins with a brief overview of the battle, and contains the following sections: "About This Lesson"; "Getting Started: Inquiry Question"; "Setting the Stage: Historical Context"; "Locating the Site: Maps"; "Determining the Facts: Readings"; "Visual Evidence: Images"; "Putting It All Together: Activities"; and "Supplementary Resources." (BT)

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Teaching with Historic Places

The Battle of Honey Springs: The Civil War Comes to Indian Territory

Teaching with Historic Places
National Register of Historic Places
National Park Service
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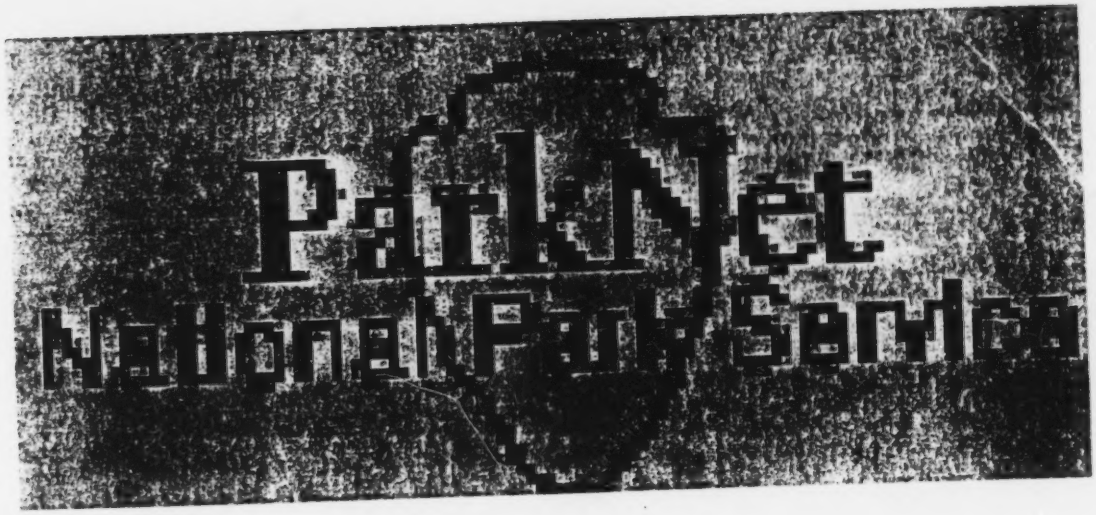

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The Battle of Honey Springs: The Civil War Comes to Indian Territory

(The National Registry of Historic Places)

Hungry and tired, Union troops marched south through early morning rain, July 17, 1863. Despite their weary state, they trekked through Indian territory knowing that just two weeks earlier their fellow soldiers had triumphed at Gettysburg and Vicksburg. Yet as they halted their march behind a ridge in order to rest and eat, the soldiers prepared for what would become a crucial Civil War battle. A battle that would help determine whether the Union or the Confederacy would control the West beyond the Mississippi River.

The Confederate troops that these soldiers would face in the Battle of Honey Springs concealed themselves among the trees lining a nearby water source after which the battle is named. They too had heard of the two recent Confederate defeats which were results of President Abraham Lincoln's "Grand Strategy" to "turn back the Rebels at every opportunity."

The Battle of Honey Springs is important because of its setting in the rolling prairie of what is now eastern Oklahoma, versus the famed theaters of the East. Also significant were the divided Native Americans who fought and died there for both the North and South. The Battle of Honey Springs illustrates how the most destructive conflict in American history moved into what was then IndianTerritory and into the lives of its residents who fought to preserve their way of life.

This lesson is based on Honey Springs Battlefield, one of the thousands of properties and districts listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

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About This Lesson

This lesson is based on the National Register of Historic Places registration file "Honey Springs Battlefield" and other sources. It was written by Mike Adkins, a social studies teacher from the Moore School District, and Ralph Jones, Superintendent, Battle of Honey Springs Historic Site. The lesson was edited by the Teaching with Historic Places staff.

Where it fits into the curriculum

Topics: This lesson could be used in teaching units on the Civil War, particularly the war in the West, on Native American history, or on cultural diversity.

Time period: 1861-1865

Objectives for students

1) To explain how and why American Indians of the Five Civilized Tribes became involved in a bloody conflict that started a thousand miles away.

2) To examine the effects of the Civil War on the Indian Territory and its citizens.

3) To learn how to interpret and compare battle narratives and use this information to create a map of the events.

4) To discover if distinct ethnic groups from the student's own community have worked together toward a common goal, as they did at Honey Springs.

Materials for students

The materials listed below either can be used directly on the computer or can be printed out, photocopied, and distributed to students.

1) one map & table showing Indian Territory and its population;

2) three readings about the battle from contemporary accounts by soldiers;

3) one illustration and table of northeastern Oklahoma and the military units involved;

4) two illustrations & one drawing of the battle.

Visiting the site

Honey Springs Battlefield Park is located in southern Muskogee County and northern McIntosh county in east-central Oklahoma. Take the Checotha/Rentiesville exit off U.S. HWY 69 (approximately 2 1/4 miles north of I-40); then take Business 69 north approximately 1 1/14 miles to Rentiesville Road; Go east 2 miles to edge of battlefield and follow signs to the monuments and visitors center. For further information contact the Superintendent, Battle of Honey Springs, Historic Site, 1863 Honey Springs Battlefield Road, Checotah, OK 74426-6301.

Getting Started
Inquiry Question

What appears to be happening in this drawing?
When do you think this scene took place?

How to Use the Inquiry Question

Begin each lesson by asking students to discuss possible answers to the inquiry question that accompanies the Getting Started image. To facilitate a whole class discussion, you may want to print the page and use it to make an overhead transparency. The purpose of the exercise is to engage students' interest in the lesson's topic by raising questions that can be answered as they complete the lesson.

Rather than serving merely as illustrations for the text, images are documents that play an integral role in helping students achieve the lesson's objectives.

To assist students in learning how to "read" visual materials, you may want to begin this section by having them complete the Photo Analysis Worksheet for one or more of the photos. The worksheet is appropriate for analyzing both historical and modern photographs and will help students develop a valuable skill.

Photo Analysis Worksheet

Step 1:

Examine the photograph for 10 seconds. How would you describe the photograph?

Step 2:
Divide the photograph into quadrants and study each section individually. What details--such as people, objects, activities--do you notice?

Step 3:

What other information--such as time period, location, season, reason photo was taken--can you gather from the photo?

Step 4:

How would you revise your first description of the photo using the information noted in Steps 2 and 3?

Step 5:

What questions do you have about the photograph? How might you find answers to these questions?

Setting the Stage

Not everyone who crossed the Mississippi River in the 19th century to establish a new home had moved west by choice. During the middle of the 1800s, for example, most of the people in what is today Oklahoma were Native Americans who were forced there by the federal and several state governments. Dominating the eastern part of the Indian Territory were the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek, and Seminole known collectively by European Americans as the Five Civilized Tribes because they adopted many "white" cultural practices.

For centuries these tribes had controlled large sections of what became Tennessee, Georgia, Alabama, and Florida. However, their authority diminished rapidly in the first part of the 19th century because state and territorial governments rarely prevented settlers from encroaching on the land reserved for the tribes. After 1800, many Native Americans, frustrated by these violations, reluctantly left their lands and relocated across the Mississippi. In the 1830s, President Andrew Jackson's policy of Indian removal forced new treaties on tribal members still in the Southeast; these required the five nations to give up virtually all of their remaining holdings. Though some Native Americans moved elsewhere within the region, most unwillingly traveled west. These migrations led to much suffering and many deaths, most notably the Cherokee "Trail of Tears" during the winter of 1838-39.

By 1860 the five nations had created new lives in the Indian Territory. They had built towns, reestablished tribal governments, planted orchards and fields, and expanded their herds of beef. A small percentage continued to hold black slaves, a practice they had followed in their old homes. Available statistics indicate that by the start of the Civil War about one Native American in 50 in the Indian Territory owned slaves. The federal government assisted the tribes by providing annual payments and stationing troops who worked to keep the peace among tribes and to prevent encroachment on Native American lands. Travelers from the east occasionally appeared, passing through in search of fertile land elsewhere, driving cattle from Texas to Kansas or hiding out from the law in remote areas.

In the months following Abraham Lincoln's election to the Presidency, both the North and South increasingly courted tribal leaders. Each side recognized the Indian Territory's importance in controlling the Trans-Mississippi West and its role as a buffer between free state Kansas and slaveholding Texas. Southern leaders also wanted to be able to draw on the area's resources: food, minerals, and manpower. As the tribes received this attention, however, they also realized that this conflict might yet again disrupt their lives.

Setting the Stage was compiled from Grant Foreman, The Five Civilized Tribes (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1934); and R. Halliburton, Jr., Red Over Black: Black Slavery Among the Cherokee Indians (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1977).

Locating the Site
Map 1: Indian Territory

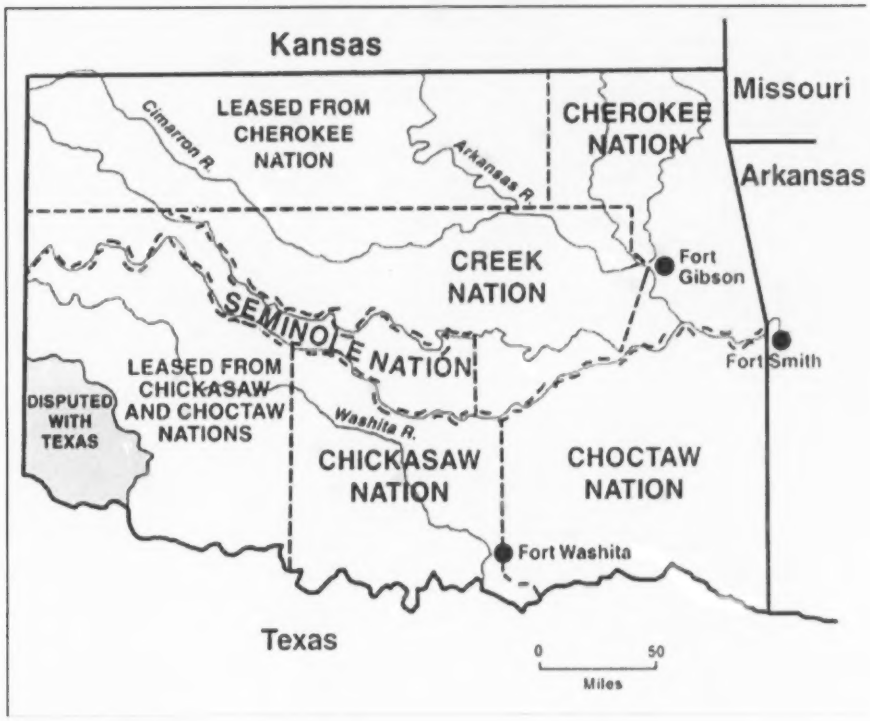


Table 1 Tribal and Slave Populations

Nation	Tribal Population	Slave Population
Cherokee	21,000	2,504
Chickasaw	5,000	917
Choctaw	18,000	2,298
Creek	13,550	1,651
Seminole	2,267	See Note 1

Note 1: Figures for the Seminole Nation are not available, but this tribe is known to have held slaves.

Native American tribes were, and continue to be, recognized as sovereign nations by the federal government. What is marked on maps as the Indian Territory was not an official territory of the United States such as Dakota Territory or Colorado Territory.

Questions for Map 1 and Table 1

1. Locate a map of the United States. How many miles is it from Indian Territory (now Oklahoma) to Washington, D.C. and Richmond, Virginia? As the Civil War began, what methods did people in the territory have to communicate with the two capitals? How closely connected to the East do you think people in the Indian Territory felt?

2. Examine Map 1. Make note of the states surrounding the Indian Territory. Which state/states were slaveholding? Which state/states were free?

3. Now examine Table 1. Write on Map 1 the slave population of each Native American tribe.

4. Which of the Five Civilized Tribes would seem most likely to be sympathetic to the Confederacy? Why? Be sure to consider both location and lifestyle. Which would be least sympathetic? Why?

Table 1 is compiled from U.S. Bureau of the Census, Eighth Annual Census (1860), National Archives; Annie Heloise Able, The American Indian as a Slaveholder and Secessionist (Lincoln, Neb.: University of Nebraska Press, 1992) 211; R. Haliburton, Red Over Black: Black Slavery Among the Cherokee Indians (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1977) 117.

Determining the Facts
Reading 1: A View from Indian Territory

The State of Arkansas, Executive Department
Little Rock, January 29, 1861

To His Excellency John Ross,

Principal Chief Cherokee Nation:

Sir:
It may now be regarded as almost certain that the States having slave property within their borders will in consequence of repeated Northern aggression, separate themselves and withdraw from the Federal Government. South Carolina, Alabama, Florida, Mississippi, Georgia, and Louisiana have already, by action of the people, assumed this attitude. Arkansas, Missouri, Tennessee, Kentucky, Virginia, North Carolina, and Maryland will probably pursue the same course by the 4th of March next.

Your people, in their institutions, productions, latitude, and natural sympathies, are allied to the common brotherhood of the slave-holding States.

Our people and yours are natural allies in war and friends in peace. Your country is salubrious and fertile, and possesses the highest capacity for future progress and development by the application of slave labor.

Besides this, the contiguity of our territory with yours induces relations of so intimate a character as to preclude the idea of discordant or separate action. It is well established that the Indian country west of Arkansas is looked to by the incoming administration of Mr. Lincoln as fruitful fields ripe for the harvest of abolitionism, freesoilers, and Northern mountebanks.

We hope to find in your people friends willing to co-operate with the South in defense of her institutions, her honor, and her firesides, and with whom the slaveholding States are willing to share a common future, and to afford protection commensurate with your exposed condition and your subsisting monetary interests with the General Government.

As a direct means of expressing to you these sentiments, I have dispatched my aide-de-camp, Lt. Col. J. J. Gaines, to confer with you confidentially upon these subjects, and to report to me any expressions of kindness and confidence that you may see proper to communicate to the governor of Arkansas, who is your friend and the friend of your people.

Respectfully, your obedient servant,
[signed] H. M. Rector,
Governor of Arkansas

Tahlequah, Cherokee Nation
February 22, 1861

His Excellency Henry M. Rector, Governor of Arkansas

Sir:
I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of Your Excellency's communication of the 29th ultimo, per your aide-de-camp, Lt. Col. J. J. Gaines.

The Cherokees cannot but feel a deep regret and solicitude for the unhappy differences which at present disturb the peace and quietude of the several States, especially when it is understood that some of the slave States have already separated themselves and withdrawn from the Federal Government and that it is probable others will also pursue the same course.

But may we not yet hope and trust in the dispensation of Divine power to overrule the discordant elements for good, and that, by the counsel of the wisdom, virtue and patriotism of the land, measures may happily be adopted for the restoration of peace and harmony among the brotherhood of States within the Federal Union?

The relations which the Cherokee people sustain toward their white brethren have been established by subsisting treaties with the United States Government, and by them they have placed themselves under the "protection of the United States and of no other sovereign power whatever." They are bound to hold no treaty with any foreign power, or with any individual state, nor with the citizens of any state. On the other hand, the faith of the United States is solemnly pledged to the Cherokee Nation for the protection of the right and title in the lands, conveyed to them by patent, with their territorial boundaries, as also for the protection for all other of their national and individual rights and interests of persons and property. Thus the Cherokee people are inviolably allied with their white brethren of the United States in war and friends in peace. Their institutions, locality, and natural sympathies are unequivocally with the slave-holding States. And the contiguity of our territory to your State, in connection with the daily, social, and commercial intercourse between our respective citizens, forbids the idea that they should never be otherwise than steadfast friends.

I am surprised to be informed by Your Excellency that "it is well established that the Indian country west of Arkansas is looked to by the incoming administration of Mr. Lincoln as fruitful fields ripe for the harvest of abolitionism, freesoilers, and Northern mountebanks." As I am sure that the laborers will be greatly disappointed if they shall expect in the Cherokee country "fruitful fields ripe for the harvest of abolitionism," &c., you may rest assured that the Cherokee people will never tolerate the propagation of any obnoxious fruit upon their soil.

And in conclusion I have the honor to reciprocate the salutation of friendship.

I am, sir, very respectfully, Your Excellency's obedient servant,
Jno. Ross, Principal Chief Cherokee Nation

Questions for Reading 1

1. By January 29, 1861, which states had withdrawn from the Union and which states did Governor Rector believe were likely to secede soon? Do you think the Cherokee and the other nations would be more or less likely to join the Confederacy if they knew they would be allied with states like Alabama and Georgia? Why or why not? (If needed, refer to Setting the Stage.)

2. What, according to Governor Rector, makes "our people and yours...natural allies in war and friends in peace"? What advantages does he claim the Cherokee would get by joining the Confederacy? What does the letter suggest the Confederacy would gain?

3. What does the Governor say about the policy of the incoming administration of Mr. Lincoln towards abolition?

4. What provisions of the treaty between the U.S. and the Cherokee does Chief Ross cite in his response to Governor Rector? What does he conclude from these facts?

5. After Chief Ross says his nation cannot become allies with the Confederacy, how does he try to keep good relations with Arkansas and the rest of the South?

Reading 1 is excerpted from The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, Series I, vol. 13 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1900) 490-492.

Determining the Facts
Reading 2: Choosing Sides

After the exchange of letters, Chief Ross attempted to keep the Cherokee Nation out of the Civil War. However, two developments gradually pushed the Cherokee towards the South. Soon after South Carolina troops fired on Fort Sumter, Federal soldiers in Indian Territory were recalled to the east. Any tribe wishing to remain neutral felt it had been left defenseless against Southern soldiers and sympathizers, a feeling that grew in August 1861 when the Confederates scored a major victory at Wilson's Creek in southwestern Missouri. A Cherokee leader named Stand Watie added to the pressure to support the South by leading slave-owning members of the tribe in an effort to recruit men to join the Confederate Army. By October 1861 Chief Ross reluctantly allied his nation with the Confederate States of America (C.S.A.).

By this time the Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek, and Seminole had allied themselves with the Confederacy. Now it was the C.S.A. who promised to protect the people and property of these five nations; it also said it would continue the trust fund payments previously made by the federal government. The tribes agreed to supply troops to defend the South from Union attacks, but the treaties said these soldiers would not be ordered to fight outside Indian Territory.

Yet such agreements could not ensure that all the members of the Five Civilized Tribes would support the Confederacy. Many Creek and some Seminole, for example, formed a band of 6,000 men, women, and children sympathetic to the Union who decided to flee north towards Kansas. The first fight of the Civil War in Indian Territory occurred on November 19, 1861, when a Confederate force commanded by a former federal Indian agent attacked this group. After two more battles they finally made it to Kansas, but only after many had died from exposure and starvation.

In 1862 the Confederacy's position in Indian Territory began to deteriorate. In March, Confederate commanders ordered Indians to a battle outside the territory at Pea Ridge, Arkansas. Although two Cherokee regiments fought reluctantly, a Creek regiment and a Seminole battalion refused to go because the Confederates were overdue in making promised payments. This violation of treaty terms alienated many Native Americans, as did the decision to transfer many of the Southern troops protecting the area to east of the Mississippi. During the summer, a Union Army detachment that included Creek and Seminole soldiers invaded Indian Territory. The U.S. wanted control of the territory, in part to keep its resources from the Southern war effort, in part so that Native American refugees in Kansas and Missouri could return home. The Northern troops won two easy victories and added to their ranks many Cherokee originally recruited by Chief Ross for the Confederacy. When this army withdrew in late summer, the territory had neither Union nor Confederate troops to keep order. Some Native Americans on both sides used this opportunity to settle scores by burning homes, destroying crops, slaughtering

livestock, and killing their enemies.

By 1863 President Lincoln and his military leaders had decided on a "Grand Strategy" that tried to "turn back the Rebels at every opportunity." The Union began a new attempt to control Indian Territory when in the spring the Federal Army of the Frontier, commanded by Maj. Gen. James Blunt, captured Fort Gibson near the Creek-Cherokee border. The Army of the Frontier included not just white troops, but a large number of Native Americans and the 1st Kansas Volunteer Infantry Regiment (Colored), a regiment recruited from ex-slaves. It was the first African-American regiment organized, and the fourth to be mustered into Federal service.

Brig. Gen. Douglas H. Cooper, commander of the Confederate forces in the area, resolved to regain strategically located Fort Gibson. Native Americans, including Creek, Cherokee, Chickasaw, and Choctaw, made up the majority of his troops. Cooper's men also included a regiment of Texans who brought leg-irons and hand-cuffs, since they expected to capture and return to slavery any African Americans who lived through the battle. Their base was at Honey Springs, named after the natural water supply that for years had made it a stop for travelers. Cooper organized his forces and waited for reinforcements to arrive from Fort Smith in Arkansas.

There were frequent skirmishes between the two sides during the early summer. Blunt, well supplied with information from Confederate deserters and Union spies, concluded that Cooper's forces would attack as soon as his reinforcements arrived. Blunt decided to attack first. By the morning of the 17th, his troops, soggy from marching south all night through intermittent rain, had halted behind a ridge to rest and eat. They stopped there in large part because less than half a mile away were Confederate troops, who concealed themselves in the trees that hugged the bank of a nearby creek. They too had been out all night in the rain.

Questions for Reading 2

1. How did both governments treat the Five Civilized Tribes?

2. Why did the Cherokee sign an alliance with the Confederate States?

3. Why did the Confederacy start to lose support among the Five Civilized Tribes?

4. Why did the battle of Pea Ridge upset so many Cherokee? What did many of the men do in response? Do you think it was right or wrong for them to switch sides? Why?

5. Why was there renewed interest in the Indian Territory in 1863?

6. What was significant about the 1st Kansas Volunteer Infantry Regiment?

What consequences were they likely to face if the Federal Army of the Frontier lost the battle?

Reading 2 is compiled from Steve Cottrell, Civil War in the Indian Territory (Gretna, LA: Pelican Press, 1995); Dudley Taylor Corinth, The Sable Arm: Black Troops in the Union Army, 1861-1865 (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 1987), 75-78; Wiley Britton, The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War (Kansas City, KS: F. Hudson Publishing, 1922) 282-83.

Determining the Facts
Reading 3: The Battle of Honey Springs

Report of Maj. Gen. James G. Blunt, U.S. Army, commanding the District of the Frontier.

Headquarters District of the Frontier,

In the Field, Fort Blunt, C[herokee] N[ation], July 26, 1863

General:

The rebels, under General Cooper (6,000), were posted on Elk Creek, 25 miles south of the Arkansas, on the Texas road, with strong outposts guarding every crossing of the river.... General Cabell, with 3,000 men, was expected to join him on the 17th, when they proposed attacking this place. I [had barely] 3,000...men...but determined...to give them battle on the other side of the river.

...[M]y forces [were] mostly Indians and negroes, and twelve pieces of artillery.... I came upon the enemy's...main force, which was formed on the south side of the timber [north] of Elk Creek, their line extending 12 miles, the main road running through their center.

While the column was closing up, I went forward with a small party to examine the enemy's position, and discovered that they were concealed under cover of the brush awaiting my attack.

As my men came up wearied and exhausted, I directed them halted behind a little ridge, about one-half mile from the enemy's line, to rest and eat a lunch from their haversacks. After two hours' rest, and at about 10 a.m., I formed them in two columns one on the right of the road...the other on the left...I moved up rapidly to within one-fourth of a mile of their line, when both columns were suddenly deployed to the right and left, and in less than five minutes my whole force was in line of battle, covering the enemy's entire front. Without halting, I moved them forward in line of battle, throwing out skirmishers in advance, and soon drew their fire, which revealed the location of their artillery. The cavalry, which was on the two flanks, was dismounted, and fought on foot with their carbines. In a few moments the entire force was engaged. My men steadily advanced into the edge of the timber, and the fighting was unremitting and terrific for two hours, when the center of the rebel lines, where they had massed their heaviest force, became broken, and they commenced a retreat. In their rout I pushed them vigorously, they making several determined stands, especially at the bridge over Elk Creek, but were each time repulsed. In their retreat they set fire to their commissary buildings, which were 2 miles south of where the battle commenced, destroying all their supplies. I pursued them about 3 miles to the prairie south of Elk Creek, where my artillery horses could draw the guns no farther, and the cavalry horses and infantry were completely exhausted from fatigue. The enemy's cavalry still hovered in my front, and about 4 p.m. General Cabell came in sight with 3,000 re-enforcements. My ammunition was nearly exhausted, yet I determined to bivouac on the field, and risk a battle in the morning if they desired it, but the morning revealed the fact that during the night they had retreated south

of the Canadian River. The enemy's loss was as follows: Killed upon the field and buried by my men, 150; wounded, 400; and 77 prisoners taken, 1 piece of artillery, 1 stand of colors, 200 stand of arms, and 15 wagons, which I burned. My loss is 17 killed, 60 wounded, most of them slightly.

My forces engaged were the First, Second, and Third Indian, First Kansas (colored), detachments of the Second Colorado, Sixth Kansas, and Third Wisconsin Cavalry, Hopkins' battery of four guns, two sections of Second Kansas Battery, and four howitzers attached to the cavalry.

Much credit is due to all of them for their gallantry. The First Kansas (colored) particularly distinguished itself; they fought like veterans, and preserved their line unbroken throughout the engagement. Their coolness and bravery I have never seen surpassed; they were in the hottest of the fight, and opposed to Texas troops twice their number, whom they completely routed. One Texas regiment (the Twentieth Cavalry) that fought against them went into the fight with 300 men and came out with only 60. It would be invidious to make particular mention of any one where all did their duty so well.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,
James G. Blunt,
Major-General

Report of Brig. Gen. Douglas H. Cooper, C. S. Army, commanding Confederate Forces

Headquarters First Brigade, Indian Troops,

Imochiah Creek, near Canadian, August 12, 1863.

General: * * *

About daylight on the morning of the 17th, the advance of the enemy came in sight of the position occupied by the Choctaws and Texans; commenced a brisk fire upon them, which was returned and followed by a charge, which drove the enemy back upon the main column. Lieutenant Heiston reported the morning cloudy and damp, many of the guns failing to fire in consequence of the very inferior quality of the powder, the cartridges becoming worthless even upon exposure to damp atmosphere. Soon after the Federals had been driven back, it commenced raining heavily, which rendered [our] arms wholly useless. These troops then fell back slowly and in good order to camp, for the purpose of obtaining a fresh supply of ammunition and preparing for the impending fight. A few remained...about 3 miles north of camp on the [Texas] road, and were so disposed as to create the impression...that a large force was [waiting].... [T]heir advance halted until the main body came up and formed in line of battle.... [M]y aide...reported their force to be probably 4,000, which I found...some 500 under the mark. After ascertaining that the enemy were advancing in force, orders were issued to the officers commanding corps to prepare for immediate action and take their positions....

...[T]here was a body of troops on my extreme right. A part of Second Cherokee Regiment...who were getting breakfast at camp, were then ordered up and conducted by myself to the right, and a messenger sent for half of the Choctaw regiment, which soon arrived and were placed also on the right along the edge of the prairie. Upon reconnoitering the enemy from the high prairie, I found their force larger than...I supposed they would bring from [Fort] Gibson, and seeing a heavy force wheeling off to their right and taking the road up...to the second crossing above the bridge--our weakest point, and from which the road continues up to the third crossing, where the Creeks were posted--I rode back to the main road, sent orders to the Creeks to move down and...flank the enemy on our left. I then rode to where I expected to find the Choctaws, in order to bring them to the support of Colonel Bass' command and the battery, which was engaged with that of the enemy. [But they had mistaken the order and] moved off on the mountain several miles with his whole force.... Messengers were sent after him and he returned promptly, but too late for the defense of the bridge. Riding back near the creek, I discovered our men in small parties giving way....

We have to mourn the loss of many brave officers and men who fell here, sacrificing their lives in opposition to an overwhelming force to save our little battery, all of which was brought off, except one howitzer, dismounted by the heavy ordnance of the enemy.

...Our forces were now in full retreat and the enemy pressing them closely.The Texans...were ordered to join me at Honey Springs, and the Creeks to withdraw from the extreme left and also to concentrate at the same place. Captain Gillett's squadron, arriving promptly...and for a short time held the advance of the enemy in check. The Choctaw...opportunity arrived at this time, and under my personal direction charged the enemy, who had now planted a battery upon the timbered ridge about 1,000 yards north of Honey Springs. With their usual intrepidity, the Choctaws went at them, giving the war-whoop, and succeeded in checking the advance of the enemy until their force could be concentrated and all brought up. The Choctaws...remained formed for hours in full view of the enemy, thus giving the train time to gain some 6 or 8 miles on the road to Briartown....

Too much praise cannot be awarded the troops for the accomplishment of the most difficult of all military movements--an orderly and successful retreat, with little loss of life or property, in the face of superior numbers, flushed with victory. The retreat of the forces under my command eastward instead of south completely deceived the enemy [creating] the impression that the re-enforcements from Fort Smith were close at hand, and that by a detour...our forces might march upon [Fort] Gibson and destroy it while General Blunt was away with almost the whole Federal force. Under the influence of this reasonable fear, General Blunt withdrew forces and commenced a hurried march for Gibson. North Fork [Town], where we had a large amount of commissary stores, was then saved, as well as the whole of the train, except one ambulance purposely thrown in the way of the enemy by the river. A quantity of flour, some salt, and sugar were necessarily burned at Honey Springs, there being no transportation for it.

Our loss was 134 killed and wounded and 47 taken prisoners, while that of the enemy exceed 200....

I feel confident that we could have made good the defense of the position at Elk Creek but for the worthlessness of our ammunition.... [T]here was a general feeling among the troops that with such ammunition it was useless to contend with a foe doubly superior in numbers, arms, and munitions, with artillery ten times superior to our, weight of metal considered. Notwithstanding all these untoward circumstances, the [Texans] stood calmly and fearlessly to their posts...until the conflict became a hand-to-hand one, even clubbing their muskets and never giving way until the battery had been withdrawn; and, even when defeated and in full retreat, the officers and men readily obeyed orders, formed, falling back and reforming at several different positions, as ordered, deliberately and coolly. Their steady conduct under these circumstances evidently intimidated the foe, and alone enabled us to save the [supply] train and many valuable lives. The Creeks...behaved admirably, moving off in good order slowly and steadily across the North Fork road in full view of the enemy. They contributed greatly to the safe retreat of the train and brigade.

...[The] Choctaws behaved bravely, as they always do.

Douglas H. Cooper,
Brigadier-General.

closely. Theattle: In July, 1863, the Union saw the Civil War swing in its favor through the pivotal battles of Gettysburg and Vicksburg. Though Honey Springs was not as important as those two, it did change the course of the war in the Trans-Mississippi West. The Union soon captured Fort Smith on the Arkansas border, and from there attempted to reassert its authority over the entire region. In early 1864, its troops marched through Indian Territory, destroying crops, burning homes of suspected Southern sympathizers, and fighting with the remaining Confederate troops in the area. This effort, rather than putting an end to rebellion, hardened the position of Native Americans supporting the Confederacy; they continued to fight. By the end of the war, 14% of all children in the Territory were orphans and 33% of all women were widows. The victorious Union decided that because the Five Civilized Tribes allied with the South, they had to forfeit all their annuities and half their land.)

Questions for Reading 3

1. According to each general, how many men fought for each side at the Battle of Honey Springs? Why might a general give figures that are higher or lower than the actual numbers?

2. In what other ways do Blunt's and Cooper's accounts of the battle differ? In what ways do they agree?

3. Why did General Blunt halt his attack rather than pursue the Confederates after his victory at Honey Springs?

4. What roles did Native American soldiers play for both sides? How did their commanders evaluate their performance? In the early years of the War, many people believed that African Americans and Native Americans could not fight. What does this battle say about those beliefs?

5. Was the end result for the Five Civilized Tribes fair? Explain your answer.

Reading 3 is excerpted from The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, Series I, vol. 22 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1900) 447-62.

Visual Evidence
Illustration 1: Northeastern Oklahoma and Surrounding Region

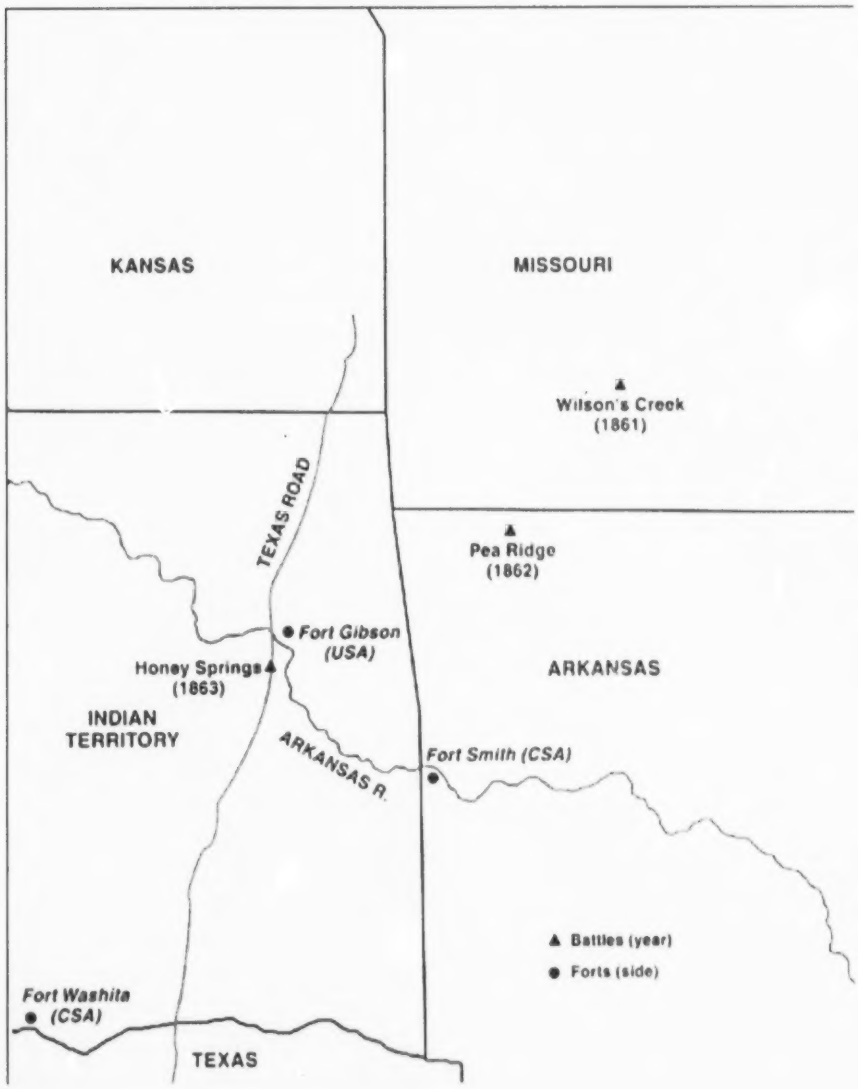


Table 2: Military units involved in the Battle of Honey Springs.

United States Army:	**Confederate States Army:**
1st Indian Home Guards	1st Cherokee Regiment
8 companies Creek	2nd Cherokee Regiment
4 companies Seminole	1st Creek Regiment
2nd Indian Home Guards	2nd Creek Regiment
1 company Shawnee	1st Choctaw & Chickasaw Regiment
1 company Delaware	20th Texas Dismounted Cavalry
1 company Keeche	29th Texas Cavalry
1 company Caddo	5th Texas Partisan Rangers
1 company Kickapoo	Scanland's Squadron
1 company Osage	Gillett's Squadron
6 companies Cherokee	Lee's Light Battery
3rd Indian Home Guards	
12 companies Cherokee	
2nd Colorado Infantry	
1st Kansas Infantry (Colored)	
6th Kansas Cavalry	*Note: A company at full strength had approximately 100 men; a regiment was 10 companies*
2nd Kansas Battery	
3rd Wisconsin Cavalry	
Hopkins' Kansas Battery	

Questions for Illustration 1 & Table 2

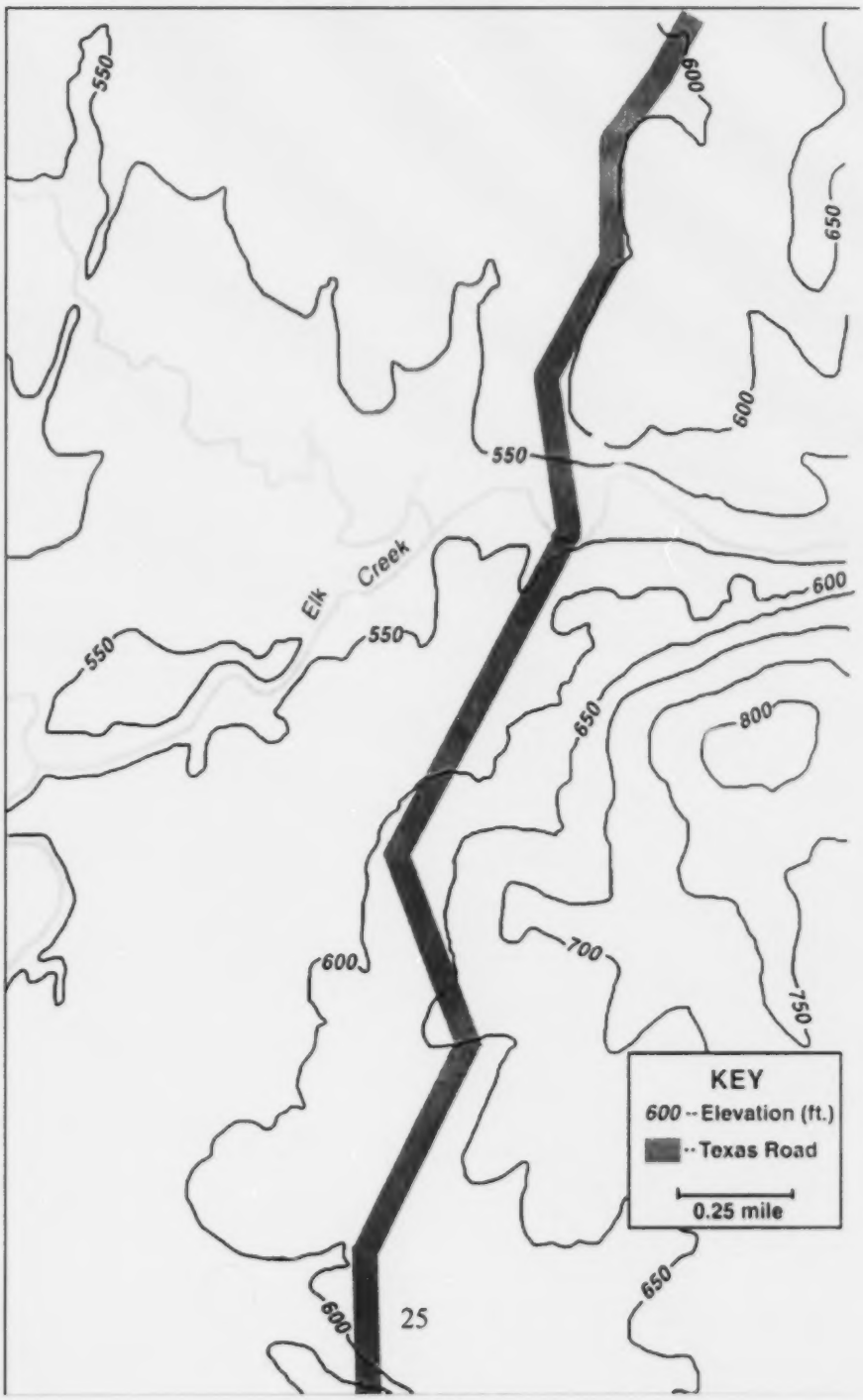
1. Examine Illustration 1. What major routes for transportation are near Honey Springs?

2. What advantage does the illustration suggest the United States Army might have over the Confederate States Army because the battle took place at Honey Springs?

3. Now study Table 2. How many Native American tribes are represented on each side? How many tribes have people fighting on both sides?

4. Refer back to your answer for Locating the Site, Question 4. Compare your answer to Table 2. How accurate were you in determining which Native Americans might be more sympathetic to the Confederate States versus the United States? Based on what you have learned in your readings and from Table 2, explain the representation of Native American tribes for each side.

Visual Evidence
Illustration 2: Location of the Battle of Honey Springs



The accounts of the two commanders make it somewhat difficult to understand what happened during the battle. Before you start the exercises below, take a minute to become familiar with the area. The lines curving across the battlefield are contour lines; they are a way to represent changes in elevation on a two-dimensional surface like a map. Each line marks a change of 50 feet; the numbers refer to the distance above sea level.

Questions for Illustration 2

1. Virtually all the fighting in the Battle of Honey Springs took place in the area shown by this map. How large, in square miles, is this area?

2. Where is the highest point on the map? What is its approximate elevation?

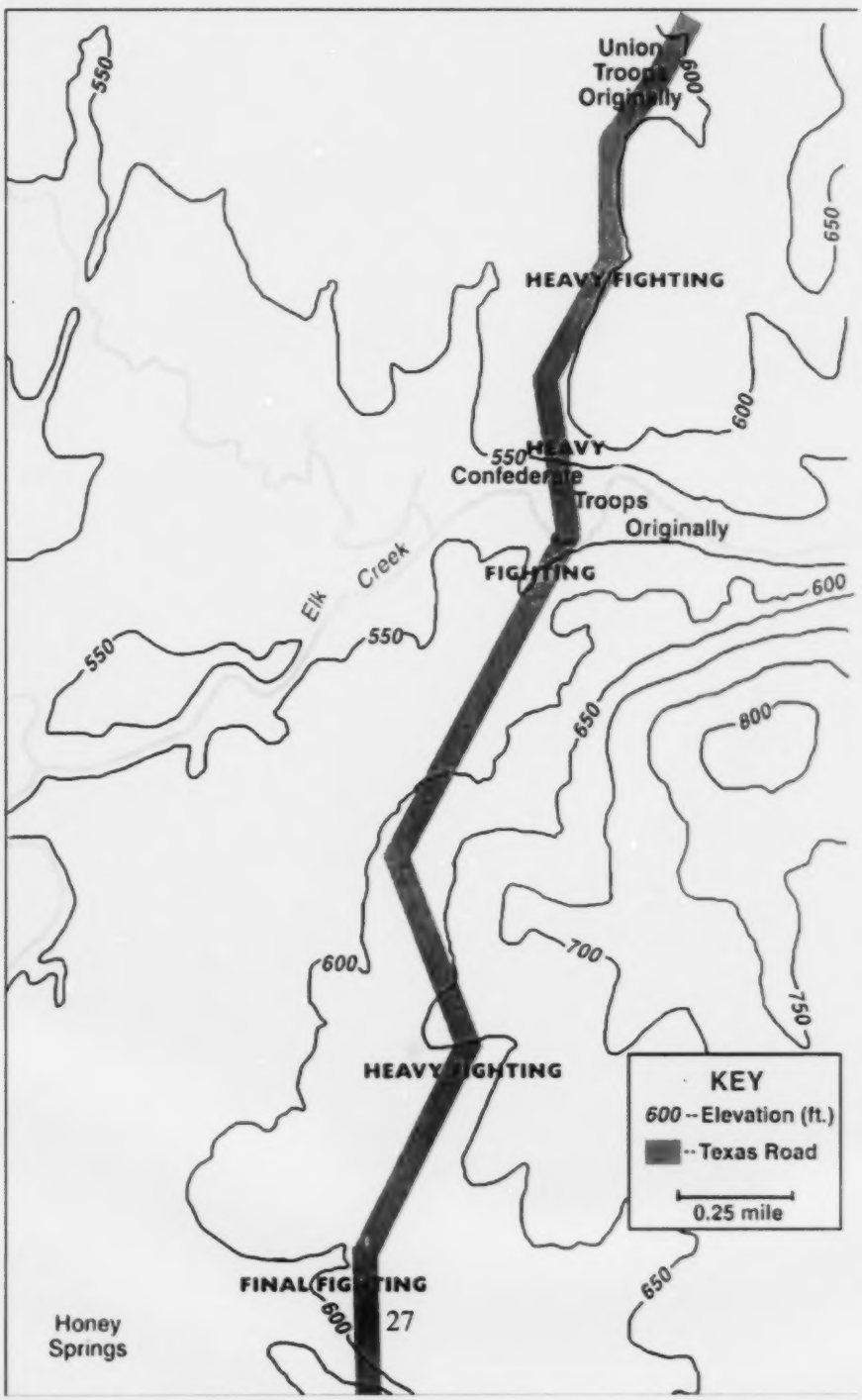
3. The Texas Road was not a paved route, but a wide path worn into the plains. Why was the route it followed a good one for cattle and wagons?

4. Use Reading 3 to help you mark the course of the battle. On Illustration 2, write AUSA and ACSA to identify the approximate position of each side's troops as they readied for battle. (Locate the Confederate troops, then determine which ridge to the North the Union could have rested behind. Remember that both commanders were estimating, not measuring, distances.)

5. Mark on the map two of the spots where significant fighting occurred. Do not include the skirmishing mentioned at the beginning of Cooper's account. Identify the earlier one "A1," the latter "A2."

6. Mark the place where fighting ended "AE," where the Union troops stopped their pursuit of the Confederates. Look in Blunt's account of the battle to find this description.

Visual Evidence
Illustration 2: The Battle of Honey Springs



Questions for Illustration 3

1. Illustration 3 shows the course of battle as reconstructed through archeological evidence. Compare this version of the fighting with what you created on Illustration 2. How accurate was your illustration? Was it difficult to plot what happened based on the written account provided? Why or why not?

2. How difficult do you think it would be to recreate a battle based on archeological evidence? What are the pros and cons of doing so?

Visual Evidence
Drawing 1: The Battle of Honey Springs

(Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper)

Caption: The war in Kansas, the Battle of Honey Springs, July 17--Defeat of the rebels under General Cooper by the U.S. Troops under Major-General James G. Blunt. From a sketch by James R. O'Neill.

Questions for Drawing 1

1. Examine the sketch, which appeared in the newspaper on August 29, 1863. It portrays Union cavalry attacking Confederate artillery and infantry positions. What different weapons appear to be used by the two armies?

2. Which side appears to be winning? On what do you base your opinion?

3. Compare this version of the battle with General Blunt's. How accurate does the picture seem to be?

Putting It All Together

The following activities will help students better understand some of the complicated conflicts illustrated by the Civil War in Indian Territory.

Activity 1: What shall we do?
Have students divide themselves into small groups and imagine that they are Native Americans attending a tribal council in early 1861. Explain to them that it will be their decision as to whether or not their nation will support the Union or Confederate cause. Each group should select a representative who, in the tradition of the councils, will be expected to speak about their group's position. Before the group representatives present, the class should decide the rules of council--does the decision have to be unanimous? If not, how large must the majority be? After the process is set, give the groups time to think about their views, then invite them to allow their representatives to make their speeches. After each group has shared, each student makes an individual vote so that a decision can be reached. At the conclusion of the exercise, assign a short writing assignment in which students give you a short description about whether this was a difficult exercise, or not, and why so. While writing their descriptions, students should consider both how the class set up the rules and came to a final decision on the issue.

Activity 2: The Great Equalizer
Point out to students that whatever the personal feelings of the commanding officers of the Confederate and Union troops, their official reports do not reveal any prejudice against Native Americans or African Americans. By doing so, students will discover to what extent racial attitudes have changed as a result of how soldiers have fought in battle. Assign a short essay using library research on the topic of how one of the following groups have participated in American wars: African Americans, Native Americans, Hispanic Americans or Asian Americans. In their essays students should note in particular what role their group of choice played in the military at the start of each war, how and why these rules changed over the course of the war, and what military leaders thought of these soldiers by the end of the war. Their essays should also include the reasons behind why the group they selected to study wanted to be part of the military.

Activity 3: Working Together Across Ethnic Lines
After reading this lesson and participating in the other activities students will have ascertained that during the Battle of Honey Springs African-American, American-Indian, and European-American soldiers fought together for the Union. Ask students to consider their own communities and whether or not there are examples in which distinct racial, ethnic, or cultural groups previously at odds banded together to meet a common goal. Ask students
how successful were these occurrences, what issue was involved, and why the different groups joined together. After this classroom discussion, assign a skit or a

written or oral report where students use library research and visits to their local historical society or cultural center to further study and learn about their example of different ethnic groups joining in order to reach a common goal.

The Battle of Honey Springs: The Civil War Comes to Indian Territory --Supplementary Resources

By looking at The Battle of Honey Springs: The Civil War Comes to Indian Territory, students learn how the Civil War created fierce conflicts among American-Indian nations who had been moved across the Mississippi River. Those interested in learning more will find that the Internet offers a variety of interesting materials.

Battle of Honey Springs, Historic Site
http://www.ok-history.mus.ok.us/mus-sites/masnum02.htm

Visit the Battle of Honey Springs' web pages to learn more about the battle and the Civil War in Indian Territory.

Oklahoma History Ring: Battle of Honey
Springshttp://www.ok-history.mus.ok.us/mus-sites/masnum02.htm

The Oklahoma History Ring Web page for the Battle of Honey Springs features a variety of related pages discussing the battle, and links to other sites featuring the Civil War, the Battle of Honey Springs, and the Oklahoma Historical Society.

The American Battlefield Protection Program http://www2.cr.nps.gov/abpp/civil.htm

The American Battlefield Protection Program, a division of the National Park Service, provides detailed on-line publications featuring different topics in the Civil War. Included is a battle summary of the Battle of Honey Springs.

Civil War Soldiers & Sailors System http://www.itd.nps.gov/cwss/index.html

The National Park Service's Civil War Soldiers & Sailors System is a recently created database containing facts about Civil War servicemen, lists of Civil War regiments, and descriptions of significant Civil War battles. Also on this site is a descriptive history of African Americans in the Civil War.

National Archives and Records Administration http://search.nara.gov/

The National Archives and Records Administration offers a wealth of information about the Civil War. Use the search engine to access a special collection of photographs covering many aspects of the Civil War. Also search on "Civil War records" to locate comprehensive Union and Confederate records.

Library of Congress
http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/cwphtml/cwphome.html

The Library of Congress created a selected Civil War photographic history in their "American Memory" collection. Included on the site is a photographic time

line of the Civil War covering major events for each year of the war.

The United States Civil War Center http://www.cwc.lsu.edu/cwc/civlink.htm
Louisiana State University maintains a Civil War Center that locates, indexes, and makes available all appropriate private and public data on the internet regarding the Civil War. The site features over 4,500 links that promote the study of the Civil War from all perspectives.

Muscogee (Creek) Nation http://www.ocevnet.org/creek/myfile.html
The Muscogee (Creek) Nation Web page offers a look at how one faction of this tribe operates as a Nation today. The site details information on their history, present-day government structure, tribal affairs, customs, and more.

Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties http://digital.library.okstate.edu/kappler/
The Oklahoma State University Library offers a historically significant, seven volume, on-line compilation of U.S. treaties, laws and executive orders pertaining to Native American Indian tribes.

Native North American Cultures
http://www.anthro.mankato.msus.edu/cultural/northamerica/index.shtml
The Minnesota State University EMuseum provides a virtual tour of Native North American Cultures. Included is information detailing histories of different tribes as well as information about daily life, language, and location.

First Kansas Colored Infantry http://www.kshs.org/search/index.htm
Search the Kansas State Historical Society web pages for a detailed history of the First Kansas Colored Infantry at Honey Springs and other battles. Also featured is their regimental flag and its history.